

**State Special Education Advisory Committee
(SSEAC)
Lynchburg, Virginia
October 24-26, 2007**

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday October 24, 2007

New member orientation was held and assignments were made to Ad Hoc Subcommittees after which the subcommittees met.

Thursday October 25, 2007

<i>Members</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Mike Behrmann	x		Susanne Conroy	x	
Suzanne Bowers	x		Emily Dreyfus	x	
Bob Chappell	x		Carol Hamilton	x	
Mary Ann Discenza		x	Jacqueline Nelson		x
Sharon Duncan		x	Peter Squire	x	
Anne Fischer	x		Carletta Wilson	x	
Melodie Henderson		x	Michael Wong		x
Cindy Mills	x		Christina Draper	x	
Rick Richardson	x		Tamara Temoney	x	

<i>Department of Education Staff</i>			
Doug Cox	Pat Burgess	Judy Douglas	
Judy Hudgins	Melissa Smith	Pat Abrams	
Cathy Pomfrey			

<i>Guests</i>			
Mona Holmes	Polly Smith	Sara Staton	Lula Bower
Bob Whytal	Pam Sydnor	Brad Bizzell	Stephen Luke
Wyllis VanDerwerker	Dorothy Narodny	Susanne Croasdaile	Suzanne Stuart
Samantha Vanderpool	Didi Zaryczyny	Randy Nixon	Gail Holloman
Wyllis Vanderwerker	Suzanne Conway	Lori Korinek	Claiborne Winborne

Call to Order

Ms. Anne Fischer called the meeting to order. She introduced Dr. Paul McKendrick, Superintendent of Lynchburg City Public Schools. Dr. McKendrick welcomed members to Lynchburg and gave an overview of some of the things that are happening in the Lynchburg school division.

Ms. Fisher requested that members and guests introduce themselves.

Panel on Effective Leadership for Inclusive Practices in Schools

Dr. Pat Abrams introduced members of the panel. The panel on effective leadership for inclusive practices in schools included a research specialist and representatives from university teacher education faculty, Virginia Department of Education's Training/Technical Assistance Centers (VDOE T/TAC), a special education teacher, and administrator.

Dr. Stephen Luke, director of research at the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities provided an overview of the research studies addressing inclusion. Much of the past research focused on attitudes and educators' training needs rather than rigorously designed studies measuring outcomes and benefits. He indicated that inclusive placement decisions are often based on people's philosophical orientation.

Dr. Lori Korinek, faculty at the College of William and Mary, described how the university special and general education faculty collaborate to prepare all teachers for creating and working in, schools that have an inclusive philosophy and implement practices such as co-teaching.

Dr. Susanne Croasdaile, specialist at VDOE's T/TAC at Virginia Commonwealth University, discussed how she works with schools to influence systems change, which usually takes three to five years involving staff discussion, reflection, and action. She noted that central office staff and school leaders play a major role in supporting inclusive practices to provide time for teachers to collaboratively plan and teach.

Mr. Brad Bizzell, specialist at VDOE's T/TAC at Virginia Tech, focused on effective leadership for including children with significant cognitive and multiple impairments. He emphasized the importance of the school leader and faculty adopting the belief that all children belong in the school and programs. The T/TAC staff work with school staffs to address their philosophical beliefs and provide skills for collaborating and teaching academics to students with significant disabilities.

Ms. Polly Smith, preschool special education teacher in Lynchburg City Schools, spoke to the importance of beginning inclusive practices with young children so that they are exposed to typically developing peers at an early age. She indicated that integrating preschool children with disabilities often requires more resources for supporting the adults across the different preschool settings.

Dr. Rick Richardson, special education director for New Kent County Schools, discussed how important general education leadership for inclusive beliefs and practices is for successful implementation in schools. He indicated that people in general education leadership positions need to support inclusive practices by changing the structures, such as teacher planning time and use of response to intervention methods, as well as providing for focused professional development on collaboration.

Discussion followed the panel presentation raising certain issues and concerns.

- (Bob Chappel) The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) could go on record with the Board of Education (BOE) that inclusion is what we believe and value.
- (Pat Burgess) VDOE initiative from the State Improvement Grant (SIG) to make the university program more inclusive needs support from the university leadership such as presidents and deans.
- (Judy Hudgins) Parents who call the state have concerns that school personnel tell them in IEP meetings that they don't "do inclusion" in that school or district.
- (Emily Dreyfus) Inclusive practices need VDOE leadership to look further at the issue; there is a need to look at analyzing data and figure out the nature of the systemic problem.

Public Comment

Public Comment was received from several individuals.

Pam Sydnor spoke about issues regarding Braille textbooks for blind and visually impaired students. She talked about the availability of Braille textbooks as well as inaccuracies in the transcriptions. She also discussed issues with dates and accommodations and the challenges that they presented to her daughter in taking national tests such as PSAT, SAT and AP exams and the fact that these scores are used for placement across the country.

Dorothy Narodny, who works with Commonwealth Autism Services, summarized services they provide for Virginian's with autism. She also talked about her involvement in the field of disabilities education with all individuals with disabilities and their families.

Suzanne Bowers provided an update on the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) and its activities. From the phone calls received at PEATC, they have noted trends in several areas including due process, eligibility issues, and measurable IEP goals. She also thanked the department for its support of PEATC's Latino Outreach initiative.

Tamara Temoney read comments received by e-mail from Teresa Gonzales who stated that parents and school personnel are not well versed on roles, procedures, and responsibilities regarding rights of children. She mentioned issues regarding IEPs and instructors being trained to cope with autistic behaviors.

A comment from Rachel Sargeant was left on the sign-in table and was not available for the public comment time. It was later made available to members. Ms. Sargeant supported the

9/25/2007 statement from the Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities regarding certain issues regarding the proposed regulations.

Lunch

Ms. Anne Fischer recognized the contributions made by two members, Dr. Robert Richardson and Ms. Emily Dreyfus, who will be leaving the committee, with a small token of appreciation. Mr. Doug Cox presented each member with a certificate in recognition of their work with the committee.

For the benefit of new members, in reference to the morning panel, Ms. Fischer reviewed issues and procedures that have been addressed in public comment during the past few years and asked the committee to make decisions on what the committee should look at. Ms. Emily Dreyfus mentioned some data issues that could be addressed in the data and reports subcommittee. Dr. Richardson asked that any recommendation made by members be in conjunction with appropriately trained personnel.

Minutes

Ms. Emily Dreyfus requested that the July 2007 minutes be amended to include:

- At the end of the presentation by Ms. Patty Pitts another sentence should be added: “A variety of questions were asked related to concerns about international teachers recruited through other types of agencies, not the cultural exchange programs.”
- At the end of the parent forum summary after ...implementation of LRE, add “the need to understand and solve systemic LRE problems,”
- After the first bullet in Mr. Cox’s discussion regarding technical diplomas add “including considerations for the drop-out rate.”
- At the end of the first sentence in Dr. Cave’s summary of the Response to Intervention Guidelines update, add “and discussed plans to develop a second guide.”

Dr. Rick Richardson made a motion to approve minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Ms. Cindy Mills. The motion was approved.

Annual Report

Ms. Anne Fischer suggested that members be prepared to work on the Annual Report on the Wednesday evening, April 16 prior to the meeting.

Mr. Doug Cox stated that the Ms. Anne Fischer had presented the Annual Report to the Board of Education at the September meeting. He complimented Ms. Fisher on an outstanding job of presenting the report and thought that it was very well received by members of the BOE.

Subcommittee Membership

Ms. Fischer reviewed the subcommittee matrix and noted that Tamara Temoney has been named

as chairman of the data and reports subcommittee. The matrix will be revised noting changes in membership on each committee and the addition of the new members.

Parent Survey Discussion for Response Rate

Ms. Judy Hudgins told members that year two of the parent survey was just completed. The responses have just been received from the survey vendor. Mr. Cox asked that members provide feedback about proceeding with a third year of the survey. He asked if it would be reasonable to think of another way to get feedback from parents rather than using a survey.

There was discussion on how the survey was carried out and who it was mailed to. Dr. Richardson reminded members that this is a self-reported survey and thus the department or SSEAC have no control over the response rate. Ms. Hudgins summarized the process that was developed by the survey vendor and the project staff at the Partnership for People with Disabilities to disseminate and advertise the survey widely in order to get a better response rate from as many populations as possible. Ms. Emily Dreyfus suggested that future plans for advertising the survey include more specific directions for how local SEAC chairmen might share information about the survey with other parents in their communities.

Ms. Fischer suggested that the committee needs to review the history of Indicator 8. New members need to receive documents given to the committee so far, the analysis of the parent survey, the new RTI Draft Guidelines document, and the state performance plan. She asked Ms. Hudgins about the timeline on receiving results from the year two survey. She also noted that another SSEAC parent representative be asked to join the Parent Involvement Priority Project, which serves as the stakeholder group for the survey, to replace Ms. Stacie Ellis.

Ms. Anne Fischer recommended that the constituency involvement subcommittee look at suggestions that have already been made regarding providing feedback on alternative ways of conducting a statewide survey in year three. She asked if there is there a cut off time for suggestions from this group as they explore the third year. Ms. Hudgins suggested that any suggestions be received before the April meeting.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting Reports

Data & Reports

Ms. Emily Dreyfus summarized activities reviewed by the committee during the past year. Focus was on the annual performance report (APR) which is now online. The committee focused on placement data and the relationship between placement to achievement and other variables, and the graduation rates of students with disabilities.

The committee had made recommendations earlier about the APR. It was suggested that this issue be placed on the January meeting agenda of the SSEAC and that the VDOE convene at least two meetings of stakeholders group. It was suggested that the APR be mailed to each local SEAC. Ms. Dreyfus distributed a handout with school data and discussed some of the issues that

the committee should look at. Members discussed some of the variables that affect different disability groups and the options for using the data.

Ms. Emily Dreyfus, on behalf of the Data and Reports subcommittee, recommended that VDOE examine the data elements and analyze the research findings to make recommendations in order to improve a group of practices for students with disabilities upon defining the group. Ms. Carletta Wilson seconded. The motion passed.

Ms. Emily Dreyfus, on behalf of the Data and Reports subcommittee, recommended that the annual performance report format option be included in the discussion at the January SSEAC meeting and that VDOE convene at least two meetings of the stakeholders group to gather input. Ms. Carol Hamilton seconded. Motion passed.

Ms. Emily Dreyfus, on behalf of the Data and Reports subcommittee, recommended that a copy of the APR for each locality be sent to that locality's SEAC chair. Ms. Carletta Wilson seconded. The motion passed.

Joint Meeting of Personnel and Constituency Involvement

Ms. Cindy Mills reported that the Personnel and Constituency sub-committees met after dinner on October 24 to discuss the IEP Facilitator proposal that had been forwarded to the SSEAC by PEATC.

During initial discussion it was clear that, while everyone supported the goal of providing support to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of IEP meetings, there are a number of factors that exist which make this a low priority for SSEAC support.

- The sheer numbers of IEP meetings statewide suggest inability to train adequate numbers of IEP facilitators to actually make an impact.
- Personnel shortages of licensed teachers and specialists (e.g., autism) present a higher priority need over a number of years in the future.
- The funding at both state and local levels is already divided into too many pieces. The "pie" is not big enough.
- There is a fine line between facilitation and advocacy and advocacy may result in adversarial situations.

The discussion then turned to what the SSEAC might do to support the goals of IEP facilitation. In that discussion it was agreed that the SSEAC should ask for a presentation from the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution (CADRE) or another group to the SSEAC. This session may result in the SSEAC requesting some moderate level of support to develop training materials and web modules to support parent to parent training or support for parent resource centers located in school divisions.

Dr. Pat Burgess updated the group on the fact that the revised licensure regulations went into effect on September 21. The state will continue licensure in E.D., L.D., and M.R., but new

provisional licenses will be General Curriculum or Adapted Curriculum. Universities are in the process of revising their programs.

Dr. Burgess reported that there was an Invitational meeting in Higher Education regarding Highly Qualified (H.Q.). The Virginia Department of Education will provide small grants to assist IHEs to assure new graduates of special education licensure programs will also be H.Q. Praxis 2 is one way of doing this at the elementary, middle, or secondary levels. At the middle and secondary levels only passing Praxis 2 content tests can also result in adding that endorsement to the license.

Ms. Anne Fischer recommended that the policy and regulations subcommittee meet prior to the January 2008 meeting. She asked that they review comments made in the SSEAC annual report and where they would like to direct the full committee before the January meeting.

Special Education Draft State Regulations

Dr. Judy Douglas and Ms. Melissa Smith, VDOE's office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services, provided an overview of the Board of Education's draft revised special education regulations. At the September 2007 meeting, the BOE approved this draft for review under the Administrative Process Act (APA) requirements. The APA requires the draft to be first reviewed by the Virginia Educative Branch (the offices of the Attorney General, Department of Planning and Budget, the Secretary of Education, and the Governor). Following this review, the APA requires a 60-day public comment period, including public hearings. The BOE selects the number and the location of the public hearings; however, VDOE will propose 8 hearings to maximize public hearing input.

Dr. Douglas and Ms. Smith reviewed the major revisions in the draft revised regulations. PEATC will be hosting five parent training events on these revised draft regulations in November and December 2007. The presentation will be made by a staff member from the Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services.

Ms. Ann Fischer requested that SSEAC's standing committee, Policy and Regulations, meet during the first week in January 2008 to consider SSEAC's proposed public comment on the draft regulations. SSEAC will review this item at its January 2008 meeting. Ms. Ann Fischer will serve as interim chair of the committee; Dr. Douglas' office will handle the committee's meeting logistics.

Friday, October 26, 2007

Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent
Mike Behrmann		x	Susanne Conroy	x	
Suzanne Bowers	x		Emily Dreyfus	x	
Bob Chappell		x	Carol Hamilton		x
Mary Ann Discenza		x	Jacqueline Nelson		x
Sharon Duncan		x	Peter Squire	x	
Anne Fischer	x		Carletta Wilson	x	
Melodie Henderson		x	Michael Wong		x
Cindy Mills	x		Christine Draper	x	
Rick Richardson	x		Tamara Temoney	x	

Department of Education Staff			
Doug Cox	Marianne Moore	Judy Douglas	Cathy Pomfrey
Suzanne Creasey	Melissa Smith	Pat Abrams	Jeff Phenicie
Judy Hudgins			

Guests	
Mona Holmes	Didi Zaryczny
Bob Whytal	Ame Jones
Samantha Vanderpool	Dorothy Narodny

Ms. Anne Fischer called the meeting to order.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Mr. Cox provided a brief update on the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) initiative, which is designed to streamline access to instructional materials for students who are blind or have other print disabilities. The Department of Education found that Virginia would not allow VDOE to enter into a contract with the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) as they required an indemnification agreement. VDOE has entered into a contract with George Mason University to do necessary print conversions.

Mr. Cox reported that the department is moving forward with the Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative. The department is planning two statewide institutes this fall. The objectives of the institutes include building understanding about RtI and its implementation in schools. VDOE is nearing completion of an RtI guidance document entitled "*Responsive Instruction: Refining Our Work of Teaching All Children—Virginia's "Response to Intervention."*" Virginia is receiving a lot of good publicity.

Mr. Cox informed members that the work with the consolidation of the two schools for the deaf and the blind is moving forward. It is believed that a new education building can be built and after that, the existing buildings can be renovated.

Mr. Cox told members that Virginia has received the state personnel development grant, formerly known as the state improvement grant. The primary purpose is to improve literacy outcomes for adolescents with disabilities. The two demonstration sites established through the current state improvement grant will be further developed and sustained and it is anticipated that by the end of this grant period there will be a pilot site in each region of the state.

Mr. Cox mentioned workshops featuring Dr. Marilyn Friend, Chairperson, and Professor of Education in the Department of Specialized Education Services at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The department is sponsoring the workshops in partnership with the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals. The workshops address the concepts for supporting all students in today's schools, including collaboration, inclusive practices, and co-teaching.

Mr. Cox provided a few highlights from the annual meeting of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE).

Constituency Reports

Name	Report	Comments
Mike Behrmann	Absent	
Suzanne Bowers		Provided information on what is happening at PEATC
Susanne Conroy		Activities of several groups in region
Mary Ann Discenza	Absent	
Christina Draper		Has met with persons on how they could be better self advocates; important for young people even in elementary schools to be at their IEP meetings; received a call last night – parent wanted to know about modified diplomas
Emily Dreyfus	Pass	
Sharon Duncan	Absent	
Anne Fisher		Isle of Wight – VADOE ranked Isle of Wight as top provider in Hampton Roads area based on performance; Chesapeake had not determined who will be chair.
Carol Hamilton	Absent	
Melodie Henderson	Absent	
Cindy Mills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with LEAs remains challenging at times (both to receive up to date school records and IEPs as well as SOL testing information and materials). • 2. Maintaining licensed teachers (as public schools generally have

Name	Report	Comments
		higher pay) – Also some schools are 12 month programs and some rural schools have difficulty attracting licensed teachers to live in that area
Jacqueline Nelson	Absent	
Rick Richardson		Shortage of qualified special education teachers and ramifications from that; many teachers provisionally licensed; other issues related to personnel shortages.
Peter Squire		Attended leadership summit hosted by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; attended state SEAC meeting; received a lot of good materials on how to become more effective state SEAC group.
Tamara Temoney	None	
Carletta Wilson		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke to several parents in Richmond and Henrico County. Students are not receiving services and parents are concerned. • Referred parents to school principals and then to special education if they can't get a resolution from the school. • Also spoke to president of the Richmond PTA who has received the same type of calls from parents. I will follow up with her.
Mike Wong	Absent	

State Assessment Overview – SOL Substitute Test for Verified Credits, Development of Assessment for Modified Achievement Standard

Mr. Jeff Phenicie distributed a handout and provided a brief overview of substitute tests that have been approved by the Board of Education that may be used for the purpose of awarding verified credit. He also updated the group on the status of the Virginia Alternate Assessment of Modified Achievement Standards (2% assessment).

Self-Determination Projects Update with a Focus on Students and Parents

Ms. Marianne Moore and Ms. Judy Hudgins gave an overview of projects and activities in the area of transition that included information about self determination and self advocacy skills for students and other persons with disabilities. The emphasis was on the “I’m Determined” project and the products that are in the works for that project. A sample of the “I’m Determined” DVD and other project products were shared with the group, along with sample Virginia Interagency Transition Council fact sheets and a draft of the IEP resources from the Partnership’s “Creating Collaborative, Standards-Driven IEPs: Training for IEP Teams.”

Review of Public Comment

Ms. Suzanne Conroy summarized the issues raised in public comment. Ms. Fischer requested that the VDOE provide a response.

Ms. Anne Fischer would like to hear more about persons with disabilities who are no longer

students and what is being done to prepare them for that step. Mr. Cox told members that he would check with Ms. Shirley Ricks at the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.

Future Agenda Items

Annual Performance Report – if ready by January 2008 meeting
Data Extrapolated from LRE Information
State Special Education Regulations

Meeting Adjourned

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

January 24-25, 2008 – Richmond - *Holiday Inn Select Richmond-Koger South* (tentative)
April 17-18, 2008 – Blacksburg
July 17-18, 2008 – Richmond - *Holiday Inn Select Richmond-Koger South* (tentative)
October 23 -24, 2008 – Winchester or Warrenton
January 22-23, 2009 – Richmond - *Holiday Inn Select Richmond-Koger South* (tentative)
April 23-24, 2009 – Williamsburg
July 23-24, 2009 – Richmond